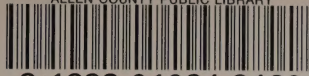


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THE BRUNSVILLE STORY

(Golden Jubilee----- 1911--1961)

PLYMOUTH COUNTY, IOWA



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AND WELCOME YOU

1910-1911

THE BRUNSVILLE

Poem Written By Charles H. Mammen

To Commemorate Brunsville 50th Anniversary

Fifty years ago or around that time
I happened to be in Brunsville a lot;
And some of the folks that I was chumming with
They are not so very easy forgot.

A good many of those men are still around
And those I'm always happy to see;
But some of the boys got so fat and bald
They don't hardly recognize me.

As you probably know this was all Virgin Prairie
Used only for pasture and hay;
After a good rain there were a few frog ponds
But it's altogether different here today.

In 1910 when the railroad was built
And the whistle blew and the bells rang;
A lot of business men wanted to be first to build
And Brunsville started out with a bang.

Ed. Johnson always had a lot of nerve
There's nothing he wouldn't tackle or try;
He built a monstrous store on a little raise
When there was water all around he was sitting dry.

When the first settlers lived here in Brunsville
There was always water standing in town
The water puddles were full of singing frogs
They were the best frog choir around.

The young frogs could sing as well as their elders
And how those frogs would yoddle and sing;
The towns people tried to get a good night's sleep
But to the frogs, that didn't mean a thing.

Ernest Boysen was our first Depot Agent
The next one was a Mr. Wier;
Then James Bratford was agent for a number of years
Then we had good times when the coast was clear.

There were parties and shows in the baggage room
For there was no hall near around;
They had Saxaphone practice in the waiting room
That could be heard all over town.

Jim had a garden along the railroad track
Where he raised good vegetables for food;
He said he put fertilizer on the strawberries
That's why they taste so good.

We had a big dish of strawberries for dinner
But I didn't use fertilizer on mine;
I told Jim I always use cream and sugar
And I liked them that way just fine.

Ed. Johnson had a large and complete general store
He had everything from groceries to eggs and shoes;
And if you took time to visit awhile
You could always find out some news.

Henry Johnson would usually candle the eggs
And sometimes he would break the shell;
If the egg happened to be too overly ripe
There always was an awful smell.

The Postoffice also was in Ed. Johnson's Store
It was quite a job to distribute the mail;
But Ed. and his daughter Marie did their best
To get it done in time without fail.

Dan Elles was the first railroad section Boss
His brother Wilbur worked with him right along
After their day's work was done in the evening
They would always be singing a song.

Dan and Wilbur Elles were very good singers
They would practice after every working day;
And harmonize, we've been working on the railroad
Most all of the live-long day.

There were a lot of good singers in Brunsville
They would sing till they were red in the face;
Henry Johnson would be singing high tenor
And Ihnke Harms would sing low bass.

As they both came from the old country
They mostly sang in their mother tongue;
They would sing Deutsch-land Deutsch-land euber alles
Like our God Bless America is sung,

Brunsville usually celebrated legal holidays
They would have a nice parade in the street;
Earnest Marienau's horse was hitched to a Gaumaque
That would make the parade complete.

They had four horses hitched to a large float
And some one led the horse on the wheel;
It was so much fun to ride the Gaumaque
That all of the kids would squeal.

Brunsville always had a lot of lively people
And they usually had something on tap;
There always was something interesting going on
That's why Brunsville is still on the map.



Charles H. Mammen
1877-1961



North side Main Street about 1915

Chapter I

BIRTH OF THE TOWN

Fifty years is really not such a long time when compared to the thousands of years that man has been on this old earth. Still, in the past fifty years, we have seen a social, economic and scientific revolution such as the world has never known. Back in 1911, when Brunsville was a mere infant, the automobile was still called the horseless carriage. Very few people had even heard of an airplane. When someone spoke of the atom, we very politely thought he had mispronounced and meant Adam.

Brunsville was a boom town in every sense of the word. The Hawarden-Merrill cutoff of the Chicago N.W. Railroad was built during 1909. A number of business buildings were built in 1910 as can be ascertained from the titles on an article from the Feb. 15, 1910 issue of the Le Mars Sentinel. "NEW TOWN WILL HAVE BANK" "Active Operations At Brunsville In Spring" — "STORES WILL BE MOVED THERE." The article went on to say that the town would be ready when the first train goes thru. That a bank, a hardware store, a general store and a lumber yard are already assured and the list will no doubt grow. By 1911, many residences and practically the whole business district had been built. A history of Plymouth County written in 1916 listed the following business directory:—

BANKS: Farmers Bank — Bank of Brunsville

BLACKSMITHS: — Fred Toel — George Benton

CREAMERY:—Plymouth Creamery Co., Jobe Kennedy Manager

ELEVATORS:—Farmers Elevator Co., Frank Hoese Elevator

GENERAL DEALERS:—Edward Johnson, John Hauschildt

HARDWARE AND HARNESS:—John F. Dirks

IMPLEMENTS:—George E. Pew

LUMBER DEALER:—Brunsville Lumber Co., George Popken, Manager

MEAT MARKET:—Nate Gearke

PHYSICIAN:—Dr. C. G. Ellsworth

RESTAURANT:—C. M. Richards

It was in the spring of 1911, about a year following the actual founding of the town, that the citizens of the village decided that they wished to become an incorporated municipality, and articles were secured for that purpose. The first municipal election was held a short time thereafter and resulted in the election of the following: C. M. Richards, mayor; Ed Johnson, treasurer; B. J. Luken, clerk; J. H. Dirks, B. H. Luken, O. F. Vo'lmar, Fred Toel, councilmen.

The primary purpose of the town has always been to serve the friends and neighbors in the surrounding community. This was clearly evident even in the early days when steps were taken to establish a creamery, which was quickly to become the village's chief industry. The creamery was organized and owned by the farmers of the community and was started in the spring of 1915. Jobe Kennedy was selected to be secretary and first manager of the company. The first board of directors included the following men: H. Meinen, president; J. Miller, vice president; Carl Ahrendt, D. H. Kruse and H. A. Ludwigs, members of the board. Considering the times, the company did a good business. Here are a few statistics: from May 22, 1915 to Dec. 31, 1915, 231,082 pounds of cream were received and manufactured into 78,111 pounds of butter, for which the farmers received a total of \$20,390. At the end of the first year of operation, the creamery had about 150 patrons.

Those early day councilmen were at the same time progressive and conservative. It is hard to say whether they were Republican, Democrat or Prohibition, but the latter is doubtful. In 1917 the council decided to build a town hall, so that they would have a suitable place to meet. Low bid for materials was \$360.00 and for labor \$129.00 or a total of \$489.00. Late the next year a resolution was passed to stop all dances for six months from date. And also Matt Klein is to close his poolhall every night by 11 P.M., no pool playing or cards on Sunday, no gambling at any time. If he violated this resolution, his place is to be closed.

In any discussion of persons who served the municipal enterprise, it would be an oversight not to mention T. M. Harms, who served as mayor from 1935 through 1944. "T. M." as we all knew him, was a Brunsvil'e booster from the start. It was to his credit that the city park was planted to trees. Also during his term, a fund was started which eventually resulted in the town water system. Improvements were made on sidewalks and streets as was the fire fighting equipment. There were occasions when his ideas seemed out of tune with the times, but you could always be sure they were intended to boost his town.



Birdseye view residential area - 1915



Float in parade about 1915 - in jest of prohibition Theme - fat, healthy men drinking beer; skinny, sickly men drinking coffee. F. Wilken driving, fat men seated Gert Null, John Barinsky; skinny men Ihnke Harms, Henry Johnson.



Celebration about 1913 showing part of parade and a stand



Brunsville Boosters at Nick Molzen farm about 1912
Louie Borchers is waving flag in back.



THE GREAT BRITISH STEELWORKS, SHEFFIELD, 1890



THE GREAT BRITISH STEELWORKS, SHEFFIELD, 1890



THE GREAT BRITISH STEELWORKS, SHEFFIELD, 1890



View of Main street looking East - about 1927

Chapter II

THE TOWN TOO TOUGH TO DIE

Everyone at some time has experienced disaster in one way or another. It is usually interesting and in a strange way exciting to see those who have had much in the way of misfortune bounce back, so to speak, and be better than he was before. It is this aspect of the history of our town which give vitality to this tale.

Life in Brunsville for the first twenty years of its existence was always interesting and lively, but in the year 1931 something happened which was to make a deep scar in the town's existence. That was the year of the big fire. For some towns, a fire of this magnitude would have meant the end. After all, all that was remaining of the North side of the main business block was the Farmers Bank building. Gone was the Bank of Brunsville, Dickman's Store, Wilkens Meatmarket, Dirks Hardware, a garage, the poolhall, a restaurant and dancehall. This was comparable to taking the heart out of the human body. It should also be said that there was very little fire insurance in those days.

Many towns would have died after a disaster such as this. Many folks thought that is exactly what would happen in a matter of a few months or years. Not so the people of Brunsville. By mid-morning following the fire, the bank was ready for business as usual. Sometime during the night, the bank officers had purchased the building of the now defunct Farmers Bank. Before very many weeks had passed, Frerich Wilken had moved an old feed storage building to the site of his burned out store and began to make it a showplace with his paintings and colored glass. This was to be the extent of any showings of confidence for many years, but misfortune did not end by any means.

A couple of years later, in 1933, the floods started to come. In some ways floods are worse than fires. After the flood was over there was always the big problem of cleaning up the mess, fears of disease and infected water supplies. Water always covered the lower part of town, filling basements and flowing into the first floor of most business places. We didn't know it in 1933, but these floods became almost an annual affair during the feast or famine thirties.

It was feast during the floods followed by famine or drought. These were the biblical "lean years" for the people of this area. No one will forget the heat—100 degrees and higher day after day. Oh, there were scattered showers which dried up before they hit the ground. The mid-day sun darkened by clouds of dust. Then the grasshoppers came and ate the little bits of green which had survived in the shade on the North side of the houses or a little patch we nursed along by daily waterings.



View of residential street about 1914

When it finally started raining again in the late thirties and early forties, we thought that better days must be ahead, and they were — but we had to have another big fire in 1940 — our elevator. This was perhaps the most spectacular fire we've ever had because of the height of the building. It was also filled with corn and grain which smoldered for weeks thereafter. Much time and work went into cleaning up the mess and by the time it was done another job was just getting started. This was the job of putting the o'd Hoese elevator building back into operating condition. This was no simple task, but it soon yielded to hard work and perserverance.

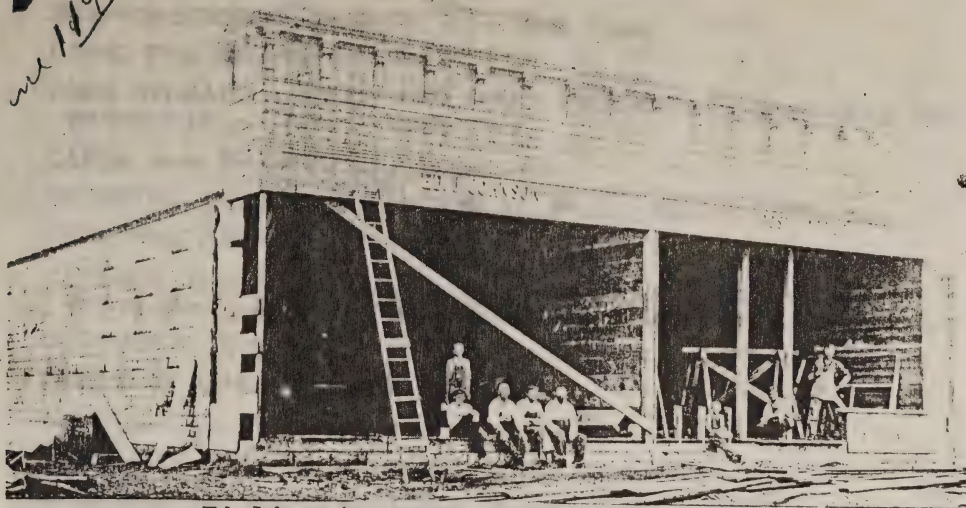
When one considers that most of these things occurred during the depression years of the 1930's, it magnifies them into proper perspective. Many places much larger and prosperous found the going to tough during these years. They gave up and moved away causing "ghost towns." These people of Brunsville did just the opposite. The tougher things got, the harder they fought. Most of us though, who lived through these years remember them not for the fires or floods, but as the years we put on the biggest and best celebrations. We recall the ball teams we had every year and the fun we had in the old swimmin hole down in the Mink creek. Some will remember them as the years when we had time to dream about the future and listened to the old fellas tell stories. We had time for those things then. Yes, they call Tombstone, Arizona, the "town to tough to die", and this slogan might apply equa'ly as well to this tough little burg.



Early spring thaw - lower part of town flooded



Chicago N. W. right of way in 1910 - Building the railroad



Ed Johnson's monstrous store building in 1910



North side Main street about 1912



Chapter III

BUSINESSES AND BUSINESSMEN

Not unlike other small towns and villages in Iowa, our business places and craftsmen are oriented to serve the farmers of our trade territory. You will recall the business director listed in Chapter II for the year 1916. The following businesses and individuals call Brunsville their home today.

ELEVATORS: Borchers Grain & Feed — Jack and Virgil Borchers, Owners

LUMBER & HARDWARE: Brunsville Lumber and Hardware — Alvin Jelken, Prop.

SERVICE STATION: Reese Oil Co. — Jack Reese

BANK: First State Bank

COLD STORAGE LOCKER AND MEAT PROCESSING: Gene's Meat Processing Plant — Gene Dickman, Prop.

CAFES: Jean Vernon's Coffee Shop

PLUMBING, HEATING & ELECTRICAL: Plueger Electric & Plumbing

CHIROPRACTOR: Dr. L. Brooks

TAVERNS: Midwae Tavern (Wm. Bruns, Prop.) — Vernon's Tavern (T. S. Vernon, Prop.)—American Legion Clubrooms & Hall (Frank Morris, Prop.)

INSURANCE: Harms Insurance Agency

TRUCKING: Oltmanns Trucking Service

BLACKSMITHS: A. C. Klemme

FERTILIZER SERVICE: A. Jelken — Nutra Flo & Uran

BOOKKEEPING SERVICE: Herman Wilken

SPRAYPAINTING: James V. Mead & Sons

PLASTERING: Darrel Luken

RUG CLEANING: Riteway Rug Cleaners

REPAIR SERVICE: Frank's Refrigeration & Appliance Repair Service — Frank Crow

FEED DEALER: A. W. Klemme — Vigortone

Some of the businesses are fairly new on the scene such as Frank Crow's Repair Service and Gene's Processing Plant. Others have been around practically since the town was founded such as the bank and the lumber yards. They may have changed hands or the name, but they have continued to operate in much the same manner down through the years. For instance, the First State Bank, was opened in 1911 as a private financial enterprise under the name of "Bank of Brunsville." According to the statement of Assets and Liabilities of Dec. 31, 1911, the bank had total assets of \$21,430.23, and C. B. Elsen was the president. Total assets as of December 31, 1961 were \$1,107,468.97, or roughly fifty times as large.



**Implement Shop - Ed Johnson, International Harvester,
dealer and garage in early 1920's.**

Another of the original business which is still operating is the lumber business. In 1910, the Moore Lumber Co. of Le Mars opened a branch yard here. It continued to operate as a branch for many years, first with George Popken as manager. Later on Carl Popken was manager and still later, Louie Plueger. In 1948, Alvin Jelken purchased the yard from Moore's and proceeded to enlarge and update the stock of lumber and hardware and associated products in the building field. Today, our lumber yard rates among the best anywhere in the county and it continues to grow. In 1959, the liquid fertilizer business was added to serve the needs of our area.

No small town would be complete without a grain elevator and mill and our town is no exception. In the early days of course, there were two active elevators, the Farmers Elevator and the Frank Hoese Elevator Co., one of a chain. The Hoese Elevator operated independently until some time in the late twenties when it was sold to the Farmers Elevator. Some of the early managers of the Farmers Elevator include Jobe Kennedy, who was the first manager, Carl Popken and Otto Pecks. In 1931, the directors of the elevator hired Herman Harms to manage the business and in 1935 they sold the two elevator buildings and grain business. In 1939, the North building, which was the operating elevator burned to the ground. It was at that time that the South building was put back into operating condition and it has been in use since. Jack and Virgil Borchers bought the business from Herman Harms in 1958 and have made many improvements and additions. At this time they are in the process of building a new feed storage building.

There were several gas stations in town down through the years, but now there is only one. The Reese Oil Co. was started in 1932 when Jack Reese purchased the station from the Oltmanns Bros. It has since been operated under the same ownership. For many years, Jack has operated a tank wagon service and in 1954 he purchased a bulk tank set-up.

All of these businesses have operated successfully for many years, growing and improving their services as the demand arose. An additional service business was started in 1958 when Gene Dickman moved here from Merrill to start Gene's Meat Processing plant realizing that there was a large area without facilities for handling the increasing home freezer market. This plant which employs three people full time is hard pressed to keep ahead of the demand which has far exceeded the original expectations.

These then are the larger businesses, which along with the various craftsmen make up the business directory in Brunsville today. The increasing demand for their services is clear proof of a need which they are intent on filling. It is evident that the quality of their services is high. As an example of this, Luken's Plastering now covers an area from central South Dakota to central Iowa and south into Nebraska. Only top quality workmanship can command attention for this large an area. It seems that what we lack in quantity, we strive to make up in quality. May it continue to be so in the future as it has in the past.

*Poem Written in Commemoration of
The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the First State Bank
BRUNSVILLE, IOWA*

by C. H. MAMMEN

In nineteen hundred and twenty-nine
As most of the older folk know very clear
The First State Bank was organized
And this is the anniversary year
Before that time it was the Bank of Brunsville
That was started in nineteen hundred and ten
But the present owners of the First State Bank
Were not the owners of the bank then
It was organized by C. B. Elsen and W. G. Bolser
Two distinguished gentlemen from Le Mars
Who built the building in nineteen ten
The year some of us got our first cars.
These two men strange as it may seem
Gave the Bank of Brunsville its name
They ran the business successfully
Mr. Bolser was experienced in the game
Elsen and Kennedy then ran the bank
They kept everything straight and fair
Then in the year nineteen eighteen
These two men sold out their share.
Henry Harms then bought out these two
Then he and sister Katherine ran the bank
Then is when Henry became Mr. H. J. Harms
When before he was just plain "Hank"
In nineteen thirty-one the building burned down
The vault only was left standing on the lot
The fire-proof safe dropped through the floor
And believe me that thing was really hot.
They moved to the Farmers Bank Building
That was really very handy you see
That banker like many others those days
Also belonged to the BBB
The building burned about 10 o'clock at night
But the papers and most everything was saved
And taken to the other bank building
Where they wanted to use them next day
Next morning at about nine o'clock
Most everything was in its places
When the customers came in to do business
They met the same smiling faces
Those were the years of hard times and bankrupt
And many a bank had to close its doors
But the First State Bank was one of the few
That was able to weather the storms

As Henry would say if you asked for advise
I tell you if you borrow money you know
Have the note come due in the early spring
For it shortens the winter so.

This is the Twenty-fifth Anniversary year
President Harms will surely show his good will
And I would like to suggest to him
To give every customer a five dollar bill

If a five dollar bill is a little too much
And some people would probably hollar
The very least that the bank could do
Give every one a silver dollar

The bank will surely celebrate this year
I would suggest they get the Brunsville hall
They would have a seating place for every one
Either this summer or early this fall

They could have some talent plays and a few skits
And some music and someone to speak
The owner would probably donate the hall
And would have everything clean and neat

The bank is in a farming community
Where the people are all Honest and True
That's what counts when you run a bank
When they all pay their notes when due

The bank has withstood the storms in the past
Let us pray that it may continue that way
May the good Lord bless those in charge
And guide them in their work every day.



HENRY J. HARMS

1888-1954

Brunsville's banker for 40 years. He enjoyed helping people whether it was to start farming or business, to get over a misfortune, to get an education or any worthwhile purpose.

Chapter IV

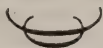
"OUR CHURCHES"

If it is true, as often been stated, that the small towns, villages, and hamlets are the backbone of America — then it is also true that the Church is the backbone of the small towns, villages, and hamlets.

The importance of the Church in the lives of the people who settled in these small communities can be shown by the close proximity of the dates on which these congregations were formed in comparison with the dates on which these towns were formed.

One of the first things that our parents and grandparents did when they settled in these communities was to begin building a church. Often before their own homes were completed, a steeple with a cross at the top would be erected in their midst.

This building, often crude but known henceforth as the "House Of God," was the unmistakable evidence of the Christian faith of those people — and the fact that it was usually one of the first to go up tells us today what came first in their sense of values.

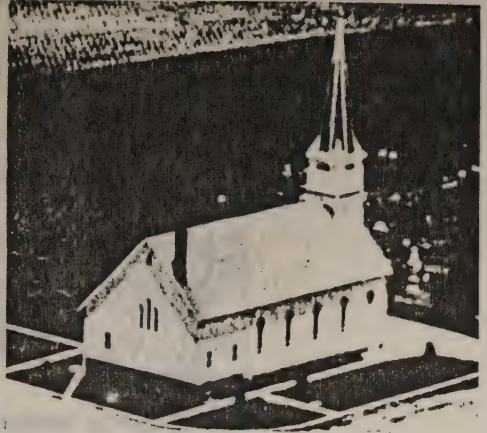


Plymouth Presbyterian Church



One of the oldest churches in Plymouth County, and certainly as old as any in our community, is the one pictured above, Plymouth Presbyterian located four miles North and West of Brunsville. According to the published church history, this congregation was organized on Aug. 11, 1872. Following the organization by Rev. George R. Carroll, occasional services were held in various homes in the community. Later, under the leadership of Rev. D. W. James, the first church was built in 1880 at a cost of \$517.56. Built during the ministry of Rev. E. W. Smith, the present building was dedicated July 26, 1930. The cost was about \$13,000.00. The congregation has prospered and grown over the years and membership today numbers about 150 adults. The present pastor is Rev. C. R. Kruse who has served since 1954.

Christ Lutheran Church



To be counted as among the oldest churches in our community and also probably the largest is Christ Lutheran. This church, located about four miles North of Brunsville like Plymouth Presbyterian, was founded in 1872. For the first three years of its existence, the congregation was served by traveling ministers. The first resident minister was the Rev. E. Beck who came in 1875 and served until 1877. In 1879, Christ Congregation erected a 24' by 36' building which served both as a parochial school and as a place of worship with pastors serving also as teachers until Fred Kusch was called in 1895. This old school building has since been moved to Brunsville and is used as a residence. Many improvements have been made in the church building since that time and at the present time the congregation is planning to add an education building and to enlarge the church vestibule. The present pastor, serving the church since 1957 is Rev. B. Nagel. Christ congregation numbers about 470 baptized members.

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church



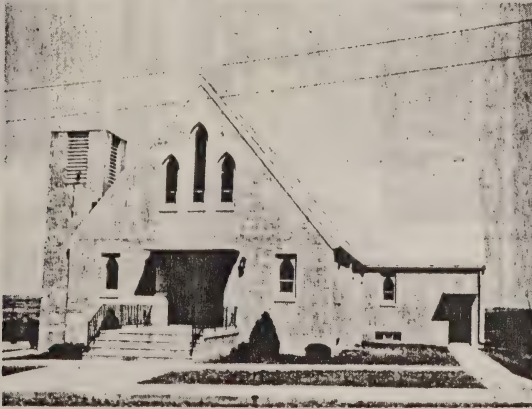
Located some 8½ miles Northwest of Brunsville on a gentle rise from the fields around is another one of our beautiful white frame churches with a golden cross rising from the spire. Some seventy-two years ago, the Rev. F. Hefner traveled here from Coleridge, Nebraska and on March 11, 1889 a congregation was organized with 16 families. Later that same year, the congregation installed Rev. L. Lorenz to be the first resident pastor. Under his direction, the first church was dedicated on Oct. 27, 1889. This building was so arranged so that the rear part was used as living quarters for the pastor and his family. It is interesting to note that one pastor, Rev. Theo. Meyer, served the church for 48 years. The congregation, which now numbers 323 souls, has been served by Rev. C. C. Gutzlaff since 1959.

St. Paul Lutheran Church



It was in the year 1894 that the early settlers in Johnson Township indicated a desire to form a Christian congregation in their midst. As a result of this, Rev. Kleinlein, then pastor of Christ Lutheran, Grant Twp. began to conduct services for a small group of families in a school house. In 1896 the congregation was formally organized under the guidance of Rev. Finke of Le Mars. The eight charter members immediately started planning a church building which was to be dedicated in 1897. From its modest beginning, the church began to grow and in 1923 the present church building was completed. A new and modern parsonage was built in 1936 to replace the one which was destroyed by fire. This church, located 7 miles Southwest of Brunsville, was united in Nov. 1957 with St. Peter church at Brunsville to form one parish. Present baptised membership is 177. Rev. Cyril Jandrey is pastor.

St. Peter Lutheran Church



As might be expected, the youngster so far as churches are concerned is located within the limits of our town. Important dates in the history of St. Peter church are (1) 1917, the year the church was formally organized by Rev. Schmidt of Ireton. This small group then purchased a church building at Dalton and moved it here. Under the leadership of Rev. Walter Zank the present parsonage was erected at a cost of \$2,945.00. The congregation grew slowly but steadily, and in 1955, during the pastorate of A. F. Zenk, ground was broken, for a new brick structure greatly enlarging the worship area and providing space for Sunday School classrooms. (The cost of the new church was \$55,000 and in May of 1960, four years after dedication,) the mortgage was burned at a special morning service. Presently, the congregation is served by Rev. C. Jandrey and has a baptized membership of 207.



The Ihnke Harms Family showing fa
1880. Notice license plate on car. Picture
Katherine, Mrs. Harms (seated), Marie. In
back seat.





farmstead built by early English settlers about
ured L to R: John (on bicycle), Mr. Harms (seated),
In car, front seat, Henry and Dick. Herman in



A long step forward in 1927



Two hits and a miss in 1933
or could you guess!!

Chapter V

HUMEROUS HISTORY & HAPPENSTANCE

By CHARLIE H. MAMMEN

Fifty years ago and thereafter, I was in Brunsville a lot, but the boys that I chummed with (some of them got so fat and bald) they don't even recognize me. As you probably know, this was all prairie used for hay and pasture. In 1910 when the railroad was built through here Brunsville started out with a bang.

Ed Johnson always had a lot of guts. He built himself a monstrous store building right in the middle of the prairie—the first building to go up. There may have been a few stakes driven in the ground by the Town-site Co. where the streets were supposed to be. Then the Farmers Bank was built across the street north of Ed Johnson's on the corner. Today it is our First State Bank. The first building was moved away and used for a chicken coop. Next west of the bank was John Dirk's Hardware and Plumbing business. Farther west was Frank Wilken's store and meat market. He also had a peddling wagon in the country. Next was John Hauschild's large grocery store. Next to that was the Bank of Brunsville. Later that whole row of buildings burned down except the Farmers Bank Building which was closed. This was about 1931 when so many banks went under. Ernest Bovsen was running this bank, who with many other bankers joined the B.B.B. (that means the Brotherhood of Busted Bankers). Most of the papers of the Bank of Brunsville were saved and taken to the Farmers Bank Building where our friend and pal, the late Henry Harms, and our dear friend, Katherine Dickman, were ready for business the next morning.

Going back to the beginning, Charlie Richards and Louis Borchers had an Implement Shop. They had a full line of machinery—one famous named brand I remember was the Acme Binder. Barney Luken had a cement block factory. Mrs. Bruns built the hotel with cement blocks. Barney built his own house with blocks. Fred Toel built his cement block blacksmith shop across the street from Barney. He was our first village blacksmith. Otto Vollmar was one of our first bankers, and I believe he built the first residence in Brunsville—the one where John Kallsen's live now. Charlie Richards also had a butcher shop. Ted Harms had a variety store—also known as Davidson's. George Popken ran the lumber yard. Vander Wicken and Wies had a pool hall. Barney Luken's boy, Harold, was the first baby born in Brunsville. I remember it well. It was the same year when little Orphan Annie was just 48 years old. Elmer Johnson was No. 2. After that they lost track. Up to now there are 117 babies born in Brunsville. At least that was the count about a week ago. Well, they were not all born in town—some were born in hospita's. Why? Because they wanted to be close to their mothers.

In 1917 the church building was moved from Dalton to Brunsville. Pastor Klatt was the first resident Pastor. Now we have a nice new church built on the hill, and as a monument it stands to the Glory of God where the bells toll every Sunday morning call'ing us to come and worship.

We must not forget our old time residents who have passed away. I am thinking of Ihnke Harms and Henry Johnson—two of our better citizens who lived in Brunsville. Ihnke Harms became so popular that they invented a slogan in his honor and today that slogan is still used by the First State Bank on their calendars. Most of you know what that slogan is "The Old Reliab'e." And then there was Henry Johnson—most of us remember him. His main job was to pack eggs in egg cases that the farmers brought in. Some in baskets, pails, or what have you at Ed Johnson's store. He was the best egg packer in town. He had one draw-back. He had one stiff finger, so when he was packing eggs he would forget his finger and stick it through the shell. That wouldn't be so bad unless he would hit one that was overly ripe.



We beat the Russian's to the moon —
H. J. Harms and Barney Lucken in 1911.

When Brunsville first started there wasn't a tree in sight, but the people all planted a few trees. Now there are a lot of nice trees in the yards. As I have always said—a yard without a tree in it isn't fit for a dog.

In 1912 or 1913 Doctor Ellsworth moved to Brunsville. He was our first resident doctor. A lady in Brunsville became sick—she a'ways felt bloated. Of course the doctor didn't know what was the matter with her so he asked her if she had ever had that before. She said yes she did, and the doctor said "Well, you have got it again."

In 1923 Clyde Pelton, the Barber came to Brunsville. He was one of the better barbers in the country. All the teen-age girls went to him to get their hair cut. Some of these girls are grandmothers now. One bald-headed man complained that Clyde charged too much to cut his hair. Clyde told him he had to spend so much time to find them.

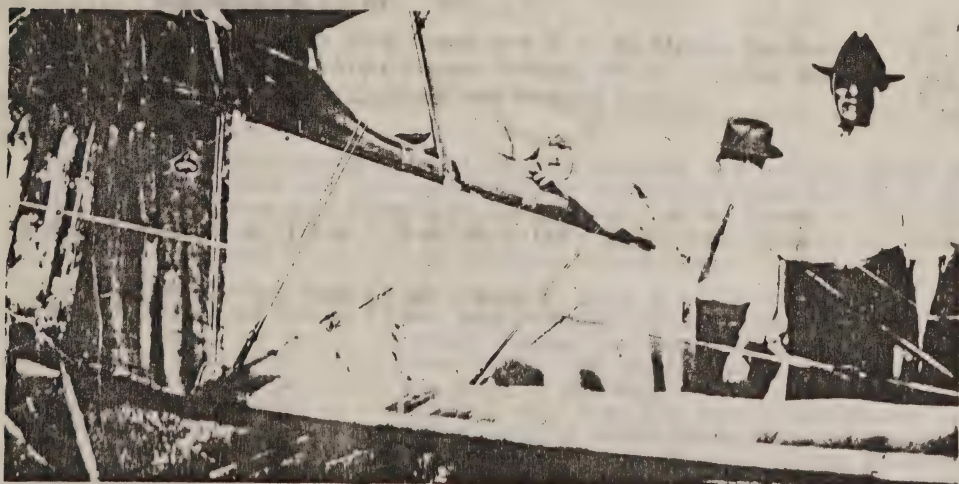


"The Katzenjammer kids" L to R Back: Sam Diediker, John Bauerly — Front: Maurice Vernon, Herman Harms

Charles Richard had the first restaurant in Brunsville. One day I went in and ordered a bowl of soup. While I was eating my soup the waiter came over. She said it looks like rain, I said "yes" it does, but it tastes a little like soup.

Years ago the grocery clerks added up with a pencil what the customer bought. Now they use a checking machine. Last week I bought a few groceries in a store in town. A lady ahead of me had her big cart full checked and was ready to pay for them. She picked up the long slip of paper and took a casual look. She said "I guess that's about right, I usually pay around \$25.00 a foot for my groceries."

In 1926 Pastor Zank came to Brunsville. During the time he was here, a man near Brunsville became sick, so he went to see the doctor. The doctor told him he had a floating kidney. That worried him, so he went to see Pastor Zank. He asked the Pastor to have the congregation pray for his floating kidney. The Pastor said he couldn't do that, the people would laugh at that. The man said I don't see why, just last Sunday you prayed for loose livers.



It's a bird, no a plane, no it's Chas. Richards piloting with Halseth Bros. looking on - Bruns pasture, 1916.

Ernest Boysen was our first depot agent. Then came a Mr. Wier, later on came James Bradford. During his stay we had shows and parties in the baggage room, and orchestra and saxophone practice in the waiting room and upstairs. Jim had a nice garden along the railroad tracks, among other things he raised some nice strawberries. We had some for dinner. Jim said he put fertilizer on them, that's why they were so good. I told him I liked mine with cream and sugar on them.

In the spring of 1911 Brunsville was incorporated. Charles Richard was our first mayor. Ed Johnson was treasurer, B. J. Luken, clerk. Councilmen were John Dirks, Barney Luken, Otto Vollmar, and Fred Toel.

A new creamery was built in Brunsville after the one in Mammen burned down. On May 22, 1915 the first cream was received. Jobe Henneday was manager and butter maker.

George Popken and Ed Johnson were our town's champion hunters. They would go out quite often, but George cou'd walk so fast that he left Ed behind so far that he would meet George coming back after George had been tramping over a couple sections. Ed said he needed a pony to keep up with George.

By CHARLIE H. MAMMEN



"Our gang in 1935" Back row L to R: Melvin Botsford, Henry McHale, Willis Harms, Johnny Bruns — Front Row John Wilken, Don Dickman and Bernard McHale.

No one had more fun in life than Charlie Mammen and we will always be grateful for his poems and the colorful history above which was written shortly before he died. There were others who could always see the humor of every day life, and one of these is Mrs. L. Roy Klatt (Ludy Pecks) now living at Vermillion, S. D. We are grateful to her for the following bits of humor.

"Mr. Kennedy (manager of the creamery) hired a half-breed Indian to haul cream. The stranger shared Shorty Irwin's apartment with him and on week-ends they would get drunk on lemon extract. One night early in the Spring, Shorty went over to Ott Peck's house (drunk) and wanted Ott to come down and help him, as he said the Indian was going to kill him. Ott told him to wait, that he would get his clothes on and go back with him. The only clothes Shorty had on was a necktie, and it being rather cool, no doubt he decided that he didn't want to stand out there in the cold and so he wandered down to Sam Diediker's house. Sam was in no mood to be disturbed from his sleep at that hour of the night so he tied Shorty to his porch post with the necktie, where Ott found him and took him to the jail for the rest of the night.



"Guess who" — restaurant North side Main street next to Farmers Bank

On Saturday nights after the dance there was always a mad scramble to get to Richards for lunch. One time Mike Flaherty, who used to be the depot agent at Dalton went with us as he had no date. We all ordered hamburgers and Mike ordered an egg sandwich. They had a girl helping in the kitchen and no doubt in the rush of things, she over fried the egg. (In those days Charley and Dolly served those big buns and the hamburgers were of equal size.) The new girl put the shriveled up egg on one of those oversized buns and brought it in and put it on the table. When Mike lifted up the top side of the bun and the egg was fried down into almost nothing, he looked at the rest of us and said, "Say, just look at this, they slipped me the joker."

Adolph Haak, a bachelor and a rather odd character, used to come to Bruns-ville quite often and whenever he did he had the habit of racing his team down thru main street. This irritated Ott Pecks, who was the town's mayor, because he thot Adolph was abusing his team, so one day he had Adolph arrested for speeding. This made Adolph kinda mad and so the next time he came to town he stopped his team on the edge of town, got off and walked his team down through the streets of town just as slow as they would go.

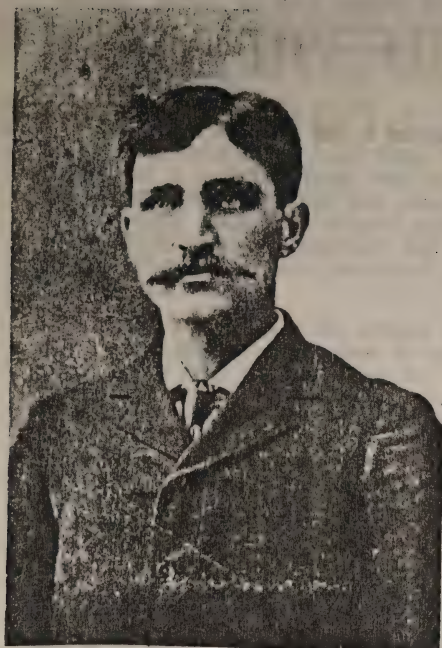
One day Charlie Mammen and Ed Eilers were in Boysen's bank after a farm sale. They were talking things over and Charlie said that the conversation reminded him of a story. It seems that this farmer had a real good dog, but the dog got very sick and the farmer being afraid that the dog would die sent for a veterinarian. The Vet. examined the dog and said he didn't think that there was anything that he could do for the dog, that it would die very slowly, by the inch. Several weeks later the farmer went to town and met the Vet. on the street. The Vet asked, "How did the dog come out?" The farmer said, "Oh, he died all right, but not the way you said he would." The Vet said, "How did he die then?" "Oh," the farmer said, "you said he would die by the inch, but the dog went towards the barn and died by the yard."



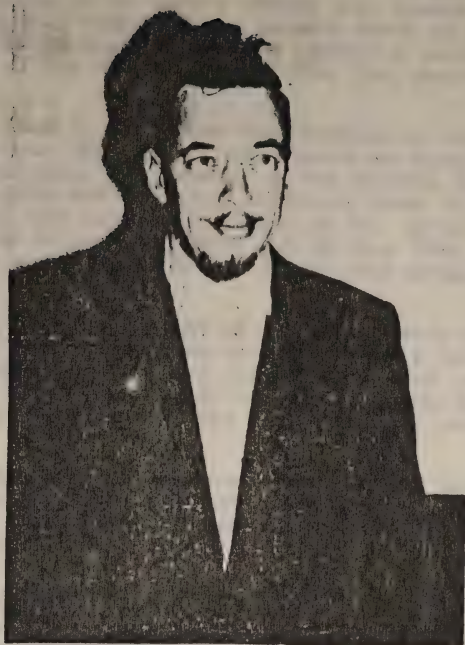
View of southwest corner of town showing Frank Hoese's Elevator, Stockyards, Lumber yard, railroad water tank and Sam Eilers farm.



Farmers Elevator with directors in foreground. L to R: Jobe Kennedy, Mgr., Louis Borchers, C. H. Mammen, G. F. Null, Otto Pecks, John Barinsky, Ernest Boysen and Hans Erickson.



Honorable Chas. Richards —
Brunsville's first mayor



His Honor - Herman Wilken,
Present mayor

Chapter VI

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS • PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE • PROPHECY

Those who know Brunsville best know that it has never been a town content to rest on its laurels. No, these are people who are always looking for something bigger and better. To prove this point consider the following examples.

A few years after World War II, the town council and other interested folks in town realized a need for a public water system. This had been a dream of former mayor Ted Harms, but the cost of such a system kept it from becoming a reality. They had some years prior to this built a public well and large cistern to be used in case of fire. In the years that past, many improvements had been made in pressure water systems and the council heard that a small town in Nebraska had such a system. Members of the council investigated this system, found it adequate for our needs and felt we could swing it financially.

Work was started in the spring of 1951, finished before fall and a brand new \$8,500 00 water system was built and paid for upon completion. This was accomplished by assessing each individual householder, who wished the water piped into his house for a proportionate share of the cost. Since the original investment many improvements have been made, including a 36 foot open well with much greater capacity than the old sand point originally in use. At present, there are only a few homes in town which are not "hooked up." For fire protection, there are seven hydrants located so that all of the town's dwellings and business places are within 150 feet of one of the hydrants.

It was only a few years after completion of the water system that another "dream" began to take shape. The folks at St. Peter's church had known for many years that their church building was inadequate for modern needs of worship and instruction. It wouldn't be fair to say that this was strictly a town affair as it really was a joint venture of the farm and town folks that make up the congregation.

The project really got a running start in 1950 when the congregation rented 80 acres of land from Aunt Vera (Harms). This project was blessed by bountiful crops and a building fund was started from the proceeds of the harvest. After many years of planning, the congregation felt they had sufficient funds to begin building their new church edifice and work was started in the spring of 1955. All during the summer, fall and winter they toiled and in May 1956, the \$50,000.00 building was dedicated. Pastor A. F. Zenk was serving the congregation at this time.

In the years since the second world war, a number of new homes have been built by people who feel that Brunsville is a good place to live or raise a family. Main street was improved by the addition of the new locker plant and meat processing establishment. Numerous remodelings have also taken place, some because of the now available water and others to make more room or just to get up to date.

Among other things of major importance is the street improvement project during 1959 when about six blocks were paved with hot asphaltic cement. The cost of this work was \$8,300.00 and most folks will agree it was money well spent. It might be said that this project was completed without it becoming necessary for the town to go into debt.

As this is the final chapter, It might be fun to look into the crystal ball to see what's coming up in the not to distant future. The future is always clouded, but it is clearing a bit and you can see a new, well almost new, building on a familiar corner of town. Why, that's the bank corner and the old building is getting a brand new front and an addition. Gee, that new brick front looks nice, doesn't it.

1937158



The present Town Council. Front L to R: Herman Harms — A. W. Klemme, Back L to R: Harold Harms — Max Utesch — Gene Dickman. Not Shown — Alvin Willer, Clerk.



North side of Main street - 1961



South side Main street - 1961

Say, what are they doing down there on that old gravel street? Why it looks like there grading it and getting it ready to do some more paving. Yes, the town council is making plans to hard surface all remaining streets in 1962 or 1963. Wouldn't you say that was pretty good for the town which burned down thirty years ago. The old town has done a lot of living since it "died" way back then.

For people who are acquainted with this little spot on the map, there's nothing unusual about making our dreams come true. These Brunsvillites are people who enjoy making the impossible come alive. Yes, they are people who see what needs to be done and then they do it. It may take a little time, but they usually get it done.

Now take for instance that group over there across the street. They are laying out the foundation of the new community recreation center, where the kids can play basketball all through the cold winter and rollerskate and dance and play ping-pong. And, say, what's going on up there on the hill. A new swimming pool you say. Well, that shouldn't surprise you. Dreams you say — sure just like the paved streets and water system. But they get them, those Brunsville folks. Incidentally, that swimming pool dream is 50 years old. Yep, the first mayor, Charlie Richards, had it way back then. You know, we never could leave down an honored citizen of our town.

If the people of Brunsville will continue to work toward the day when their dreams can be fulfilled, the future will indeed be a bright one for them. Some people say that the small town is through, that it will soon dry up and blow away. That statement may be true as a rule, but there are always exceptions to the rule. Brunsville has always been an exception as it never was blessed with any of the natural aids to growth and prosperity. Its greatest asset has always been the great determination of its residents not to give up. Those who would criticize us for lack of progress, might consider the odds.

Those factors which seem to spell the end for many small towns, may act in reverse for our town. Take the automobile, which has enabled us to travel more freely to do our shopping and to find entertainment. By the same token, it makes it possible for us to live further from the place of employment. It is a simple matter for people to live in Brunsville and work in Le Mars or Sioux City. Electric lights and an adequate water system make it possible for people living here to enjoy all the modern conveniences available to people living in cities. This will become all the more apparent when we complete our street improvement program and county roads to the North and South have been hard surfaced. In addition, there are today, many choice building lots at reasonable prices and a tax rate substantially lower than that found in adjoining towns and cities. A population increase of 17% from 1940 to 1960 would seem to indicate that some people have begun to think along these lines.

Another factor which will definitely affect the future of Brunsville and for that matter every town and city throughout the country is the increasing rate of growth of population in our nation. Indeed, there are experts in the field of population trends who feel that in perhaps another one hundred years standing room will be hard to find. Most of us hope that day will never come, but if present trends continue there is no doubt that additional room must be found for our increasing population and those areas lying near larger cities and towns will be the first to feel the effects of this increase. If any one doubts this, look at the way houses are springing up along Hwy. 75 North of Sioux City, and also the many new subdivisions in our county seat.

So it appears that there are two contradictory trends in evidence in our community, that of a declining agricultural population and of an increasing urge of people living in cities to get back to small towns for suburban type living. Those small towns which are progressive and have confidence in their future can expect to feel the full impact of the latter trend with its accompanying growth. It isn't going to happen overnight in town's such as ours, but the trend has started and it will continue as long as we are willing to show our confidence in the future, by making civic improvements as fast as possible.

This then is our history and a prediction of our future. It will indeed be interesting to open these pages again in twenty-five or fifty years to see where we have been right or where we have erred and being human, error we will.



Brothers of the Brush. Front row L to R: — Arnie Klemme, Charlie Plueger, Bill Richards, Gene Dickman. Back row L to R: — Jack Reese, Pete Bock, Frank Crow, Herman Wilken, Del Koopman.

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION MAY 29 & 30, 1961



Jubilee Committee

● MONDAY - MAY 29, 1961

2:00 P.M. Parade
3:00 P.M. Stage Show
4:15 P.M. Beard Judging
5-7:30 P.M. Supper Hour
8:00 P.M. Stage Show
9:00 P.M. Dance at Legion Hall



● TUESDAY - MAY 30, 1961

10:00 A.M. American Legion Memorial
Day Ceremony - Brunsville
Ballpark
2:00 P.M. Parade
3:00 P.M. Stage Show
5-7:00 P.M. Supper Hour, Carol
Gronemeyer at the Organ
8:00 P.M. Stage Show
9:15 P.M. Dance
11:00 P.M. Drawing for door prizes

WEDDING GOWN FASHION SHOW



THE KANGAROO COURT



—"your Honor, I object"



"your Honor, gentlemen of the jury, in defense of my illustrious client"



Herman J. "Itchy" Harms gets his due

JUBILEE COSTUMES



"A ladies man if he so desired"
L to R: Mrs. Wm. Richards, Her-
man Harms and Mrs. Chas. Plue-
ger.



Two of Brunsville's liveliest citizens

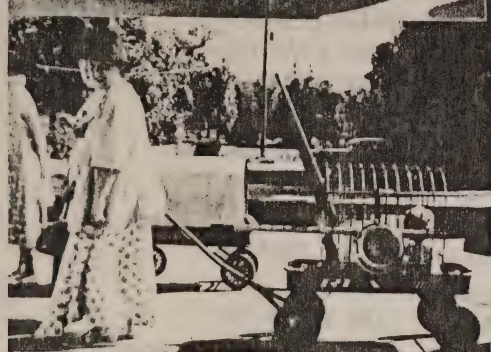


"All dressed up and no place to go but home."
L to R: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Clark; Mr. and Mrs. T. S.
Vernon; Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Richards



THE BROWN FAMILY
January 1910

KIDDIE PARADE AT FALL FESTIVAL - SEPTEMBER 10, 1960



We wish to thank the following Brunsville businessmen for helping to sponsor this Anniversary Book.

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